

Introduction

The Northern Virginia Region is the northern most portion of the urban crescent. The urban crescent extends from Virginia Beach through Richmond to the Washington, D.C. border and is comprised of approximately 1,300 square miles. Region 8 is characterized by a variety of landscapes and land uses from the rugged Blue Ridge Mountains in the west, moving eastward across the rolling Piedmont to the gently sloping Coastal Plain. Framed by the Potomac River to the north and east, this region is primarily made up of farms in the western areas, then sprawling subdivisions before the densely populated urban areas along the northern and eastern parts of the region. The region is feeling the pressures of development from the nation's capital and its proximity to the industrial northeast section of the United States. Steeped in history, the modern effects of intense development and a diverse population have greatly influenced its growth and the built environment.

Region 8 includes the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William; the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park; and the incorporated towns of Herndon, Leesburg, Vienna and Dumfries. A major economic influence of the state, Region 8 is an area of contrasts. The vibrant eastern urban areas of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church contrast with the predominantly rural character of rolling farmland, winding country roads and small historic towns in the western part of the region. These areas are feeling development pressures, and large open spaces are often interrupted by subdivisions with few public lands. Picturesque villages such as Aldie, Waterford and Middleburg, once agricultural market towns that serve as small commercial centers for rural areas, are also experiencing the intense pressures of nearby urbanization. Suburban sprawl is the interface of these two divergent development patterns. With government services as the primary industry and the guiding force for area development, the desire for cheaper land and the draw of a vigorous job market put transportation corridors over capacity.

Throughout Region 8, in response to the intense development pressures, more and more landholders are looking for protection of agricultural open lands and the rural heritage. Several land trusts have been working for years to protect lands for scenic and agricultural purposes. Recognizing the value of the area's open space, residents of the region have dedicated

thousands of acres to conservation easements. Marked by topographic variety, numerous rivers and streams, and many notable cultural and historic sites, the area offers a full range of outdoor experiences. Whether hiking, biking or horseback riding, exploring the forests or paddling the rivers, the outdoor enthusiast has many choices. The preservation of remaining open space in urban areas, and the effective management and protection of undeveloped land in regions of rapid growth, are among the greatest challenges facing Region 8.

As the region continues to struggle with one of the fastest growing populations in the state, the accompanying demands for services and facilities strain the municipalities throughout the region. As limited land becomes more precious, it will be even more difficult to provide opportunities for nearby recreation and open space. In 2000, the region had a population of 1,815,197. By 2005, the population had grown to 2,021,100, which is an increase of approximately 13 percent and is approximately 27 percent of Virginia's population. Region 8 also accounts for about 60 percent of the state's population growth. With all the localities in the region experiencing growth, it is anticipated the regional population will increase at the high rate of 13.6 percent to 2,479,500 in 2020. Loudoun, Prince William and Manassas Park are among the fastest growing localities in the state, with growth rates of 49 percent, 32 percent and 35 percent, respectively, from 2000 to 2005.

Region 8 is also experiencing the largest change in population composition of all the planning districts due to the large increases in minority groups. Overall, Region 8 has the largest concentration of Hispanics and foreign-born residents, with numbers ranging from 16 percent to 45 percent of the population. Due to this growth rate, it is critical for recreation planning organizations to consider how to meet the ever-increasing needs of these unique populations.

Recommendations applicable to all regions are found in chapters III through IX. To meet needs established in the 2007 *Virginia Outdoors Plan* (VOP), it is important to integrate these recommendations with those that follow for Region 8 into regional and local planning and development strategies.

Outdoor recreation

For a general discussion of outdoor recreation trends, issues and planning considerations in Virginia, see Chapter II: Outdoor Recreation Issues, Trends and Survey Findings, and Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Planning and Related Issues.

Although participation in recreational activities fell over the past five years, the 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* (VOS) recorded the top 10 most popular activities for the urban crescent, of which Region 8 is a part. They are, in order of participation rates, driving for pleasure, walking for pleasure, visiting historic sites, swimming, visiting natural areas, sunbathing, fishing, picnicking, mountain biking or bicycling, and running or jogging. Participation rates close to the top 10 were play-ground use and boating. Respondents to the survey indicated that access to water and trails for walking, cycling, jogging, hiking, fitness and horseback riding were not being adequately met. Demand for horseback riding trails in Region 8 is one of the highest in the state, and provisions are inadequate to meet that demand.

As localities plan for the future to meet outdoor recreational needs of residents, they are encouraged to include small neighborhood parks, larger regional facilities, and trails linking people and community resources (see Table X-8). These, along with horseback riding, require a large amount of land and may need to be met by adjacent regions that have excess facilities. Significant drops in activity days were observed in bicycling, camping, basketball, recreational sport field and tennis.

The linking of existing recreational, historic, cultural and natural resources with trails, blueways and greenways could increase the number of miles of trails suitable for walking, bicycling and boating. Other activities of note that need to be addressed in planning for future recreational activities were ones with the greatest amount of change in demand. The top four activities that experienced an increase in activity days were: exercise trails (up 138 percent), volleyball (up 87 percent), off road motorcycling (up 84 percent) and visiting natural areas (up 76 percent).

All of the municipalities in Region 8 have local park and recreation departments or authorities. These departments and authorities serve their citizens with an average per capita spending of \$90.90. Arlington and Alexandria have some of the highest per capita spending rates in Virginia, at \$158.68 and \$136.05 respectively. This compares to a statewide per capita

spending on parks and recreation of \$55.31; including \$85.51 from towns, \$43.75 from counties, and \$76.45 from cities.

The following are recommendations for meeting outdoor recreation needs in Region 8:

- Regional and local agencies should continue to better serve Hispanic cultural groups by establishing trust relationships, hiring bilingual staff, advertising in the Spanish media, hosting Hispanic-themed events and creating programs with input from the Hispanic community. Similar strategies are effective for other cultural groups.
- Due to the increase in cultural and ethnic diversity in the Commonwealth, local and regional agencies should consider making signs, literature and audio displays available in languages other than English based on the local population and user groups.
- Based on existing local support, the Fairfax County Park Authority should continue to use alternative land acquisition techniques to add acreage to the region's parkland that protects open space and provides recreational facilities.
- Regional and local organizations should recognize the strong citizen desire to balance the limited outdoor recreation resources between active and passive recreation activities. The growing numbers of people participating in passive activities, like birding, photography and nature study, have increased the demand for open space to accommodate these activities.

Land conservation

A detailed discussion on statewide awareness of the need for conservation of farmland, parks, natural areas, and historical and cultural resources is found in Chapter III: Land Conservation.

In Region 8 there are a limited number of public, private or semi-public sites that have conservation easements on their lands to protect necessary natural resources and provide outdoor recreational opportunities.

Land conservation recommendations include:

- Federal agencies should strengthen protection and management of conservation sites on federal lands.
- Federal, regional and local organizations should consider the protection of passive natural areas for habitat conservation. It is recognized that habitat conservation will enhance the quality of life in this highly developed and urbanized area.

- With intensified pressures for growth and development in Region 8, regional and local organizations and agencies must protect water quality, natural resources and recreational opportunities.

Land Trusts and Conservation Programs Operating in Region 8:

- Accokeek Foundation
- Appalachian Trail Conservancy
- APVA Preservation Virginia
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Civil War Preservation Trust
- Department of Historic Resources
- Land Trust of Virginia
- McLean Land Conservancy
- Northern Virginia Conservation Trust
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Potomac Conservancy
- The 500-Year Forest Foundation
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- Virginia Outdoors Foundation
- Waterford Foundation

Green infrastructure

Information about green infrastructure is found in Chapter IV: Green Infrastructure. Regional recommendations for green infrastructure include:

- Local and regional agencies should become informed and educate constituents about green infrastructure planning, including guidance on local zoning initiatives for changing community design and transportation systems.
- State, regional and local agencies should identify opportunities for open space preservation and for park development connecting Quantico and Leesylvania State Park with Washington, D.C. using greenway corridors along the Potomac River and its tributaries.

Programs

The following recommendations integrate statewide program initiatives into responsive regional strategies for outdoor recreation and conservation. The statewide program areas addressed in this section include: trails and greenways, blueways and water access, historic and landscape resources, scenic resources, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways, scenic rivers, watersheds, environmental and land stewardship education, and the private sector. Recommendations are bulleted or numbered and are not sequenced by state or local

priorities. Numbered recommendations are site specific to the regional map at the end of this section.

Trails and greenways

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiatives, Greenways and Trails.

- Regional and local organizations should develop theme trails to link vineyards, historic districts and birding sites.
- The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) should continue to develop trail systems within wildlife management areas to facilitate access for activities other than hunting and fishing.
- Regional and local agencies should continue to develop the Council of Government Green Space Project that supports greenways as a priority issue.
- Regional and local organizations should create more multi-use natural surface trails throughout the region.
- Regional and local organizations should develop a trail network linking adjacent counties throughout the region.
- Regional and local organizations should continue to develop greenway trail systems along the Difficult Run, Sugarland Run, Limit Run, Pohick-South Run, Turkeycock-Holmes Run, Cameron Run, Folly Lick, Rocky-Cub Run and Four-mile Run stream valleys.
- Regional and local organizations should develop Potomac River greenways.

Statewide trunkline trails

1 The **Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT)** was designated by Congress and is managed by the National Park Service. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) has member clubs that voluntarily work with federal, state and local governments, and numerous individual landowners to solve problems associated with the acquisition, development, administration, management and maintenance of the AT. Local and regional partnerships with the AT and ATC should continue to protect the setting and viewsheds along the AT to preserve this outdoor recreational experience and reputation as a footpath in the wilderness.

2 The **East Coast Greenway**, proposed to span almost 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida, aims to connect all the major cities of the East Coast along a continuous off-road path. This trail will make use of waterfront esplanades, canal paths, railroad corridors and park paths for cyclists, hikers, skaters, equestrian-

ans and people with disabilities as it connects urban, suburban and rural America. National, state, regional and local organizations should partner to identify and secure the best corridor for the East Coast Greenway as it traverses the Northern Virginia region.

3 The **Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail (PHNST)** connects the outstanding natural and cultural features along a 700-mile corridor of the Potomac River from the Chesapeake Bay to the Allegheny Highlands. The National Park Service (NPS) manages this partnership project and should work to complete development of the PHNST to include a parallel water trail with an adequate public access. NPS should implement management strategies to protect the setting with buffers, setbacks, vegetative screening and similar viewshed preservation tools.

Other trails

4 The **Bull Run–Occoquan Trail** is an 18-mile National Recreation Trail for hiking and equestrian use that passes through 5,000 acres of Occoquan shoreline parklands, which is owned by the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Regional and local agencies should work to connect this trail to the PHNST and Bull Run Mountain.

5 State, regional and local agencies should partner to develop and complete the **Leesylvania State Park to Prince William Forest Park connector** and identify other regional trail connectors.

6 State, regional and local agencies and organizations should provide a trail connection between **Prince William Forest Park** and **Conway Robinson State Forest**.

7 Regional and local agencies should coordinate with NPS to implement the proposed hiking and bicycle access to **Prince William Forest Park** from Route 234.

8 Regional and local organizations should continue to improve and upgrade the **Fairfax Cross County Trail** to link existing local and stream valley parks between Occoquan River at Laurel Hill Park and Great Falls National Park.

9 Regional and local organizations should develop the proposed **Broad Run Stream Valley Greenway and Linear Park** from Lake Manassas to Lake Jackson to include multi-use trails with pocket parks.

10 Regional and local organizations should continue the **Accotink Greenway Trail** from Lake Accotink Park to Accotink Bay.

11 National, state, regional and local organizations should complete the **Mount Vernon Trail** from Roosevelt Island to the American Legion Bridge (Interstate 495).

12 National, state, regional and local organizations should complete the connection between the **W&OD Trail** and the **Appalachian Trail** and the connection between the W&OD Trail and **White's Ferry**. Upon completion, the connection and the W&OD Trail will be an effective east-west axis, linking the Chesapeake Bay with the Appalachian Mountains and serving as an inter-county collector for existing and developing trails throughout the region.

13 Regional and local organizations should complete the **NoVi Trail**, which connects various public sites in the Vienna area of Fairfax County.

14 Regional and local organizations should develop a **Mill-to-Mill Trail** between Aldie Mill Historic Park in Loudoun County through the Bull Run Mountains to Beverley Mill in Prince William County.

Water access and blueways

A discussion of the water access in the Commonwealth can be found in Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Water Access and Blueways.

Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should establish cooperative agreements among localities, other agencies and private landowners to meet the increasing need for public access to recreational waters.
- Regional and local agencies should identify strategies to make additional waterfront resources available for public use.
- Regional and local agencies should provide adequate support facilities and services, such as restrooms, concessions, parking and maintenance for existing and proposed public water and beach access areas.
- Regional and local agencies should acquire or maintain access to existing public beaches and water access sites that may be jeopardized by changes in land use or development activities.
- Regional and local agencies should increase public access opportunities for boating, fishing and beach access on the Potomac and Occoquan rivers.
- Regional and local organizations should consider enhancing water access facilities for rowing as the

sport increases in popularity. Specific locations should be identified, studied and developed similar to rowing sites on the Occoquan River.

- 15 National, regional, state and local organizations should work in partnership to complete the **Potomac River Water Trail** upstream to Great Falls.
- 16 County commissioners, mayors, businesses, tourism agencies and nonprofit organizations should continue to promote the **Captain John Smith Water Trail** along the Potomac River.
- 17 Regional and local organizations should continue to develop the **Occoquan Water Trail** with more amenities and interpretation for the boating public.
- 18 Local agencies, businesses and organizations should implement the **Potomac River Waterfront Plan** in Alexandria.
- 19 Local agencies and organizations should address the need for a boathouse on the **Potomac River** in Arlington. Citizen groups interested in promoting youth rowing programs indicate a demand for this facility. In addition to offering water access for non-motorized boating, the facility could offer water access for outdoor educational programs.

Historic and landscape resources

Consideration should be given to evaluating potential historic and landscape recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Historic and Landscape Resources.

The VOS identified visiting historic and natural areas as the second and fifth most popular activities, respectively. With its close proximity to the nation's capital and its long influence on our nation's history, protecting and enhancing the historical, cultural and natural sites of Region 8 becomes paramount. Significant historical sites include George Washington's home and grist mill, Manassas Battlefield, the Patowmack Canal and Arlington Cemetery. Connecting these sites through alternative transportation facilities will go far in continuing to make them a draw to the region and protecting the inherent qualities of each special site.

Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should identify historic and archaeological resources that can be used for tourism, recreation and education. These resources should be included in local land use planning and

decision-making processes to promote preservation and protection.

- Regional and local agencies should build local historic attractions, historical societies, museums and other tourism organizations in the region to include the Virginia Association of Museums, Virginia Civil War Trails, APVA Preservation Virginia, the Virginia Main Street Program and others to enhance local heritage tourism, educational and recreational offerings.
- Regional and local agencies should encourage local governments and private organizations that own historic properties in the region to manage properties effectively for long-term protection and to maximize public benefit consistent with the nature of the historic property.
- Regional and local agencies should recognize the multiple historic and cultural resources within the rural landscape through rural historic districts.
- Regional and local agencies should support the creation of other heritage area programs to promote tourism and preservation in distinctive regions.
- State, regional and local agencies should consider the expansion of historic districts to preserve resources and promote economic development.
- Regional and local agencies and organizations should partner to preserve historic battlefield sites, including Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville battlefields and their environs.
- 20 DCR and local governments should support designation of the nationally significant historic corridor along the **Journey Through Hallowed Ground (JTHG)** route to increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism. The Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership is a four-state, nonprofit organization dedicated to raising regional, national and international awareness of the historic, cultural and natural resources along a corridor generally following the Old Carolina Road (routes 15, 20, 33 and 231) from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to Monticello in Virginia. A corridor management plan is being created for the JTHG Corridor.
- 21 **Manassas National Battlefield Park**, a 5,000-acre NPS property dedicated to the preservation of the scene of two major Civil War battles, should be protected to preserve its integrity. Local government should coordinate with NPS to implement the *Manassas Battlefield General Management Plan* and consider the impacts of future development on and near this property.

- 22 Regional and local agencies and organizations should support the designation and development of the **Washington-Rochambeau Trail** as a National Historic Trail, which follows the revolutionary trip of George Washington and the comte de Rochambeau after the victory at Yorktown.
- 23 State, regional and local organizations and agencies should designate the **Catoctin Rural Historic District** in Loudoun County and continue to protect the properties within and adjacent to the district.
- 24 State, regional and local organizations and agencies should designate the **Centerville Historic District** in Fairfax County and continue to protect the properties within and adjacent to the district.
- 25 State, regional and local organizations and agencies should create the **Vienna Trail of History** on public parkland between Lahey Lost Valley Park and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens Regional Park with a link to the W&OD Trail to highlight Virginia Revolutionary War history and the architectural styles of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Scenic resources

Consideration should be given to potential scenic recommendations in this region. For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Resources. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Regional and local agencies should develop corridor management plans for scenic byways, blueways, greenways and scenic rivers to assure preservation of the scenic quality of the corridor.
- Regional and local agencies should protect the scenic value of lands adjacent to publicly owned properties, as well as the scenic value of working agricultural and forestal areas key to maintaining a sense of place and economic vitality of the region. Scenic attributes to be considered include:
 - Encourage development away from mountaintops to protect significant vistas.
 - Consider timber harvesting impacts on key viewsheds.
 - Protect viewsheds along river corridors and scenic byways.
 - Create scenic overlooks and vista cuts along Virginia byways and scenic highways to enhance the visual experience of traveling.

- 26 **Goose Creek** from its headwaters to the Loudoun County line was designated a state Scenic River by the General Assembly in 2007.

- 27 The ATC, partnering with regional and state agencies and organizations, should protect and conserve **Snickers Gap**.

- 28 The ATC, partnering with regional and state agencies and organizations, should protect and conserve **Ashby Gap** and **Manassas Gap**.

Scenic highways and Virginia byways

Opportunities to traverse Virginia's scenic and cultural landscapes are enhanced through nationally recognized designation. On September 22, 2005, four Virginia roads were given national byway designations: The George Washington Parkway (GW Parkway), located in Region 8, was one that was given the highest designation as an All-American Road. This designation allows localities along the route to access federal dollars for byway corridor projects (see Chapter VI). These major scenic highways attract tourists from throughout the nation, as well as international visitors.

There has also been a tremendous interest in thematic driving trails including, the African-American Heritage Trail system, Civil Rights in America Heritage Trail, Civil War trails, Birding and Wildlife trails, George Washington Parkway, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground and other driving tour routes.

For more detailed information, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Scenic Highways and Virginia Byways.

Scenic roads recommendations for the region include:

- Regional and local agencies should recognize and nominate scenic roads for designation as Virginia byways.
- Regional and local agencies should partner with other state, local and professional organizations to develop corridor management plans to protect the scenic assets of byway corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should incorporate Virginia byways and scenic highways into local comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances to ensure viewsheds are conserved and the sense of place retained along these corridors.
- Regional and local agencies should support designation of nationally qualified historic corridors to

increase civic engagement and foster heritage tourism.

- While the overall character of the GW Parkway remains intact, subdivisions exist and are being developed within a few hundred feet from the corridor potentially affecting future visitor experiences. Communities along the GW Parkway should strengthen local comprehensive plans and change zoning ordinances to create special zoning regulations that protect its national status as an All-American Road, and its intrinsic value, unique scenic resources and economic benefits associated with the parkway's viewsheds.

The following road segment has been recommended for consideration as Virginia Byways:

29 Route 15 from Gilberts Corner to Orange as part of the JTHG.

Scenic rivers

In Region 8, Goose Creek and Catoctin Creek are designated scenic rivers. For detailed information about the Virginia's Scenic Rivers Program and its purpose, benefits and designation process, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Recreation Programs and Initiative, Scenic Rivers. Regional and local recommendations include:

- Localities should adopt planning tools (e.g., land use overlays, corridor management plans) that will afford special recognition and protection to Virginia's scenic rivers.
- 30** Continue protection of **Goose Creek** through creation of a 300-foot setback for development along its entire length.

The following river segments are potential Virginia Scenic Rivers and should be evaluated to determine suitability for designation:

- 31 Bull Run** in Prince William County.
- 32 Occoquan River** in Fairfax City and Prince William County.

The Goose Creek Scenic River Committee has been in existence since the 1970s when Goose Creek was designated a scenic river. This committee has created partnerships with Loudoun County, business, industry and developers to ensure protection of Goose Creek. In 2007, the Goose Creek Scenic River Committee, along with the Fauquier County Goose Creek Task Force, received the Best Preservation of a Scenic Water Corridor award from Scenic Virginia.

Watershed resources

Region 8 is in the Shenandoah-Potomac rivers watershed, a sub-basin of the Chesapeake Bay. For information about Virginia's watershed programs, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Virginia's Watershed Programs.

Watershed groups in Region 8

- Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Piedmont Environmental Council
- Prince William Conservation Alliance
- Virginia Conservation Network

Watershed recommendations for this region include:

- Regional and local governments should protect the management of watersheds by integrating watershed management planning with local land use ordinances and comprehensive plans through DCR's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act land use management initiative. All localities in Region 8 but Loudoun County, the cities of Manassas and Manassas Park, and the town of Leesburg fall under the Bay Act regulations.
- The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) should continue to encourage cooperation between local jurisdictions, water and sewer agencies and authorities, and the state to target parkland and riparian lands that protect drinking water supplies while addressing outdoor recreation and park needs of the region.

Environmental and land stewardship education

For detailed information on Environmental and Land Stewardship education, see Chapter VII: Outdoor Programs and Initiatives, Environmental and Land Stewardship Education. Environmental and land stewardship recommendations for this region include:

- Fairfax County should implement the Fairfax County Natural Resource Management Plan to guide natural resource conservation efforts.

Federal programs

For information on federal programs affecting Virginia's outdoor recreation and conservation opportunities, see Chapter IX-A: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency.

National parks

- Local and regional government, user groups and nonprofits should work with NPS to revise policy that allows mountain bikes to use appropriate national park trails.
- NPS and state, regional and local agencies and organizations should continue collaborative efforts through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Program and Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail to connect people to heritage, outdoor recreation, and educational opportunities and resources.

33 NPS should coordinate with local government, and regional and state agencies to implement the **Prince William Forest Park** General Management Plan. Prince William Forest Park is an outstanding resource in a rapidly developing area. Work should continue to protect the boundaries and connect the park resources with other county facilities. The proposed hiking-bicycle access to the park from Route 234 should be implemented. All lands within the legislative boundary of Prince William Forest Park should be acquired. A trail should be provided between Leesylvania State Park and Prince William Forest Park as a segment of the PHNST.

34 NPS should coordinate with regional and local agencies to implement the **Manassas Battlefield** General Management Plan. A plan should be developed for a trail connection between Manassas Battlefield and Sully Woodlands, including the trail connection between the park and Conway Robinson State Forest.

35 NPS should coordinate with regional and local agencies to implement the **Great Falls National Park** General Management Plan.

36 NPS should coordinate with regional and local agencies to implement the **Wolf Trap Farm National Park for the Performing Arts** General Management Plan, including construction of a pedestrian walkway across the Dulles Toll Road connecting to other projects in the region.

37 NPS should coordinate with regional and local agencies to implement the **Theodore Roosevelt Island National Park** General Management Plan.

38 NPS should coordinate with regional and local agencies to implement the **Arlington House National Park** General Management Plan.

39 The much-needed improvements at **Belle Haven Marina** should be maintained and managed by its concessionaire and NPS in harmony with appropriate resource management, taking into account the close proximity of Dyke Marsh. A cooperative agreement should be developed that will result in the continued public operation of the facility and its proper maintenance. The affordable and convenient access to the Potomac River that Belle Haven Marina offers makes it a popular and valuable amenity in an area lacking in water access sites.

40 NPS should actively pursue protection of additional land around **Harpers Ferry** to preserve the integrity of the site.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

41 The BLM, state, regional and local agencies should work to conserve **Meadowood Farm**, which is adjacent to Mason Neck State Park and a BLM property. If conserved, this land will increase wildlife habitat and open space in Region 8 and provide outdoor recreation opportunities including horseback riding, hiking and mountain biking.

National wildlife refuges (NWR) and fish hatcheries

42 **Occoquan Bay NWR** is made up of the former Woodbridge Research Facility and the area known as the Marumsco NWR. This refuge is part of the Potomac River National Wildlife Refuge, as are Mason Neck and Featherstone NWRs. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) should consider enhancing passive recreational public access to these sites to include nature study, fishing, bird watching and trail use. In addition, buffer protection for water features should be sought within the refuge.

State facilities and programs

For a discussion of state facilities and programs throughout the entire Commonwealth, see Chapter IX-B: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations are listed by agency or program.

State parks

- The need exists for additional parkland and water access in this region of the state. Potential acquisitions should be explored in northwestern Loudoun County along the Potomac River corridor east of Short Hill Mountain.

43 Mason Neck State Park (1,825 acres) is located in Fairfax County. This day use park focuses on interpretive and environmental education programs, in addition to providing hiking trails, picnicking, fishing and a car top canoe launch. In accordance with the park master plan, and funded by the 2002 General Obligation Bond (GOB), the park will be expanding the Elizabeth Hartwell Environmental Education Center into a more functional visitor center-office complex. An additional residence has also been funded. The master plan also recommends the renovation of the Jammes Complex into an overnight environmental education center.

In addition to the unique natural resources of the park, it also has numerous cultural sites. The Taft Archaeological Site is on the National Register of Historic Places. Archaeological research is being conducted at the Lexington Plantation site. The natural and cultural resources of the park create numerous opportunities for cooperative programming with Gunston Hall, Potomac River National Wildlife Refuge, Pohick Bay Regional Park and BLM's Meadow Farm site. The park serves as an access point to the bike-walk trail along Gunston Road. The park could also serve as an access point to the Potomac River Water Trail and newly completed Occoquan Water Trail. The park's location on the Mason Neck peninsula, along with the other publicly owned and managed lands make the area suitable for links with the East Coast Greenway and PHNST. The region offers the opportunity for other expanded trail opportunities.

44 Leesylvania State Park (542 acres) is located in Prince William County on a peninsula bordered by the Potomac River, Neabsco Creek and Powells Creek. The recreational offerings of the park include picnic shelters, boating, bank and pier fishing, and hiking trails. The park has boat launching ramps, sailboat hoists and a car top launch area for smaller boats. Through the 2002 GOB, the park obtained funds for an additional large picnic shelter with restrooms. The boat ramps, docks, gas and mooring piers were damaged during Hurricane Isabel and have since been repaired and improved with supplemental funds from the 2002 GOB. Along with the recreational facilities, the park offers an ideal setting for environmental education programming based out of its visitor-environmental education center. The park also contains culturally significant sites, the Leesylvania Archaeological site and the Civil War Gun Battery at Freestone Point, which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is also the site of what was then Leesylvania Plantation in Colonial America, the birthplace of Henry Lee III (Light Horse Harry), a

Revolutionary War hero and father of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Efforts are underway to create a connector trail between Leesylvania and Prince William Forest Park. The park's location on the Potomac River should create access opportunities for the Potomac River Water Trail, as well as the East Coast Greenway and PHNST.

45 George Washington's Grist Mill Historical State Park will be transferred to the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association upon completion of the restoration projects.

State forests

46 The Department of Forestry (DOF) should continue to develop educational opportunities at **Conway Robinson Memorial State Forest**. The DOF should coordinate with local governments to develop a trail linking to Sully Woodlands and other regional park resources.

State natural area preserves

Natural area preserves within this planning district are Ellick Woodlands in Fairfax County and Bull Run Mountains (in part) in Prince William County. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has documented 341 occurrences of 153 rare species and natural communities in Region 8. Thirty-three of these species are globally rare, and two are federally listed as threatened or endangered. As of November 2006, there are 88 conservation sites identified within Region 8. Sixty-one sites (69 percent) are protected to some degree through ownership and management by state, federal and non-government organizations. However, only four sites are protected well enough to ensure the long-term viability of the rare species and natural communities they support.

DCR recommends that all unprotected conservation sites, and all unprotected portions of partially protected sites, be targeted for future land conservation efforts. The appropriate method of protection will vary with each site but may include placing the site on Virginia's Registry of Natural Areas, developing a voluntary management agreement with the landowner, securing a conservation easement through a local land trust, acquiring the site through a locality or local land trust, dedicating the site as a natural area preserve with the current owner, or acquiring the site as a state-owned natural area preserve.

Within Region 8, DCR is particularly interested in protecting:

- Wood turtle habitat.
- Diabase woodlands.

47 State and local agencies should secure additional conservation easements and other permanent protection of critical lands along the **Potomac Gorge**. Fairfax County currently protects some portions of the Gorge.

48 DCR should continue efforts to protect the natural and scenic resources of the **Bull Run Mountains**.

State fish and wildlife management areas

- DGIF should continue to work with local and regional governments to support the Birding and Wildlife Trail program.

State forests

- Local and regional agencies should encourage the use of Department of Forestry (DOF) Best Management Practices in floodplain forest areas, particularly those adjacent to state-designated scenic waterways.
- Local and regional agencies should use DOF properties as field classrooms to help with educational programs.
- Local and regional agencies should coordinate with DOF and seek the assistance of local trail and river user organizations to develop forest trails and publish maps for each state forest, as well as establish greenways and blueways for public use.
- Local and regional agencies should investigate opportunities to acquire fee simple ownership or easements to conserve working farms and forests in the region.
- Local and regional agencies should work with DOF to create defensible space around buildings to reduce the risk of wild fires through the DOF Fire Wise Program.
- Localities should work with DOF on education and monitoring of tree diseases and other pests that could weaken the forested environments.
- Agricultural lands should be targeted for reforestation to protect the water quality of the area and limit the effects of erosion on these lands.

Transportation programs

- Local and regional agencies should develop alternatives to the use of private automobiles for daily activities. Transit systems, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, improved community design, as well as a change in people's attitudes toward transportation alternatives will be needed for the trans-

portation system of the future to meet capacity needs and energy constraints.

- Local and regional agencies should work with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to implement Context Sensitive Solutions that accommodate multiple transportation modes.
- Local and regional agencies should recognize the need for a network of low-speed, low-volume roadways used by equestrians, pedestrians and cyclists, and they should include protections for this network in their comprehensive plan.
- Local and regional agencies should encourage the development of a permanent process for integrating the recommendations of local public health agencies, and they should include "active living" opportunities into all phases of transportation planning, land use planning and project design.
- State, regional and local agencies should give priority to improving the linkages of recreation areas across major transportation corridors.
- State, regional and local agencies should provide lighting for commuter trails.

49 **U.S. Bicycle Route 1** is a federally designated route recognized by the American Association of State Highways (AASHTO). This route is shown on VDOT's official county maps with state signage along its route. State, regional and local agencies should identify and develop the best corridor for U.S. Bicycle Route 1, to include an alternative corridor that crosses the state north-south from Arlington to the North Carolina border, onto safer road corridors. The bicycle corridor should be enhanced and properly identified with signage.

50 Localities should work with Adventure Cycling Association and other biking groups to develop a corridor for the **Atlantic Coast Route** through Virginia.

51 The Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority (NVRPA) should upgrade the **W&OD Trail** to accommodate increased commuter bicycle traffic where possible.

Other state lands

For a discussion of other state lands, see Chapter IX-C: Resource Agencies. The following state-owned lands contain significant undeveloped open space that may have some potential for local recreational use. Each site should be assessed and, where appropriate, a cooperative agreement should be developed to make these resources available for local use as parks and open space.

- Community colleges may have land that could be evaluated for its recreational potential.

52 With the relocation of more than 22,000 Department of Defense jobs to **Fort Belvoir**, the Army should design any additional facilities with a minimum footprint and provide necessary recreational opportunities on site. The Army should promote non-motorized access to the facility by incorporating an extensive network of trails for use on-site and connecting off-site. The Department of Defense should maintain public access to the Accotink wildlife viewing area at Fort Belvoir. Additionally, any surplus land on or adjacent to Fort Belvoir should be identified as potential open space and recreational land. Should portions of Fort Belvoir be considered surplus, a local or regional recreation agency should be contacted for evaluation of the land.

53 Marine Corps Base **Quantico** should provide on-site recreation for new employees. Consideration should be given to allowing portions of the base for non-motorized trail use. In the future, should Quantico lands be designated for surplus, the local government should have the option to evaluate the property for outdoor recreation and open space potential.

54 Fairfax City and Fairfax County should continue to work with **George Mason University** to enhance recreational opportunities for students and the community within and outside of the campus.

Local and regional parks and recreation departments

For a discussion of local and regional parks and recreation departments, see Chapter IX-D: Resource Agencies. Local and regional recommendations include:

- Explore reclamation of abandoned landfills into new and needed parks.
- Consider cooperative management for the recreational use of private, corporate, state or federally owned lands in order to increase local access and meet outdoor recreation needs.
- The NVRPA is encouraged to add more member jurisdictions to the authority to expand its work in conservation and recreation throughout Region 8. The NVRPA should continue to provide regional leadership for the conservation of natural, historic and recreational resources. NVRPA should continue to maintain a leadership role along with the National Park Service, community groups and other public agencies for the development of the PNHST.

In Region 8, the NVRPA provides a significant amount of the recreational land and open space for its citizens. The NVRPA represents three counties and three cities: Arlington, Fairfax, and Loudoun counties and the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church and Fairfax. NVRPA's mission is to enhance the communities of Northern Virginia and enrich the lives of their citizens through the conservation of regional natural and cultural resources. It provides diverse regional recreational and educational opportunities and fosters an understanding of the relationships between people and their environment. NVRPA achieves this mission at the same time it demonstrates one of the highest rates of self-funding of any park agency in the nation at nearly 80 percent.

The NVRPA provides almost two million citizens with some of the finest managed recreational facilities in the country. From wave pools to golf courses, boating facilities to quiet nature trails, the NVRPA sites offer visitors a full range of outdoor recreational opportunities. More than 10,000 acres of woodlands, streams and rolling Virginia countryside are preserved in the 21 parks within the system. There are more than 25 miles of shoreline parks on the Bull Run-Occoquan rivers and 13 miles of shoreline parks along the Potomac River. For more information, visit www.nvrpa.org.

- All localities should develop and implement hiking and bicycling plans to connect parks, schools and neighborhoods. Encouraging biking and walking within the community can enhance community health and spirit.
- Regional and local organizations and agencies should continue to connect lands and open space for wildlife and water quality.
- The City of Alexandria should implement *Alexandria's Open Space Plan*, including the completion of the Green Crescent.
- 55** Fairfax County Park Authority should complete and implement the comprehensive master plan for **Sully Woodlands Regional Park**, a 4,400-acre site in western Fairfax County.
- 56** The Fairfax County Park Authority should develop **Laurel Hill Park** in accordance with the master plan for this old prison site.

57 Local and regional agencies should evaluate a multi-use trail-bridge connection between **Ben Lomand** and **Bull Run Regional Parks**.

58 The City of Arlington should complete **North Tract Park**.

Private sector

Much of the demand for outdoor recreation is met by the private sector. Planning to meet the recreational and open space needs of the Region 8 will require cooperation among local governments, the development of inter-jurisdictional partnerships, private sector support, and a dedicated source of funding for land acquisition and facility improvements. For a discussion of private sector role, see Chapter IX-E: Resource Agencies. The following recommendations pertain to this region:

- The private sector should evaluate the opportunities for campgrounds, resident summer camps for children, golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, marinas and indoor recreational facilities. Possible

entrepreneurial opportunities may exist for outfitter services for canoeing and kayaking, boat launches and canoe-in campgrounds.

- Evaluation for fee-based hunting, fishing and boating access should be conducted by the private sector.
- Private sector businesses should consider the adaptive re-use of existing properties in urban areas to provide for recreational needs. Abandoned, unused available sites, including rail yards and empty “big box” buildings may be potential recreational assets.
- The mutual benefits enjoyed by a public-private recreational partnership are apparent in the ongoing implementation of the PHNST plan. Continued partnerships should be formed to support private enterprises such as bed and breakfasts, museums, historic sites and recreational facilities for trail users throughout the corridor.
- The Northern Virginia Visitors' Consortium is encouraged to continue its role in promoting partnerships to support the heritage and recreational opportunities in Region 8.



Boating is one of the most popular activities at Leesylvania State Park. Photo by DCR.

Table X-8. Region 8 (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Baseball	2,617,139	517	fields	501	16	148
Basketball	5,096,013	1,209	goals	475	734	1,042
Bicycling	6,379,893	454	miles	NI		
Mountain	821,683	58	miles	NI		
Other	5,558,210	395	miles	NI		
Lake, river and bay use (combined)	5,714,251	92,479	water acres	13,724	78,755	102,366
Power boating	2,310,983	55,701	water acres	S		
Sailing	355,536	3,077	water acres	S		
Saltwater fishing	2,156,917	12,133	water acres	S		
Jet ski, personal watercraft	404,916	6,344	water acres	S		
Water skiing, towed on water	485,899	15,225	water acres	S		
Camping	1,509,052	8,900	sites	1,775	7,125	9,397
Tent camping	963,897	5,685	sites	377	5,308	6,759
Developed camping	545,155	3,215	sites	1,398	1,817	2,638
Fitness trail use	3,982,001	319	mile trails	34	285	367
Fields (combined)	6,889,494	1,448	fields	661	787	1,157
Football	2,291,231	482	fields	661	-179	-56
Soccer	4,598,263	967	fields	-	967	1,213
Stream use (combined)	3,875,340	2,255	stream miles	157	2,098	2,674
Freshwater fishing	2,891,691	2,033	stream miles	S		
Human-powered boating	726,873	185	stream miles	S		
Rafting	75,058	13	stream miles	S		
Tubing	181,718	24	stream miles	S		
Golfing	4,355,314	147	courses	972	93	131
Hiking, backpacking	1,836,935	942	trail miles	671	271	512
Horseback riding	543,180	235	miles	136	99	159
In-line skating	1,511,027	108	miles	NI		
Jogging, running	25,183,787	2,018	mile trails	NI		
Nature study, programs	560,957	80	sites	35	45	65

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

S: same as combined

NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

(-) indicates surplus

Table X-8. Region 8 (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) Existing and Projected Outdoor Recreation Needs – continued

Activity	Activity Days	Demand	Units	Supply	2010 Needs	2020 Needs
Picnicking away from home	2,557,883	6,641	tables	5,436	1,205	2,900
Skateboarding	1,457,697	449	sites	NI		
Snow skiing or snowboarding	742,675	19	ski lifts	-	19	24
Softball	2,962,799	527	fields	409	118	253
Sunbathing, relaxing on beach	7,288,484	522	beach acres	7	515	649
Swimming	19,751,990	1,270		NI		
Outdoor area	9,382,195	961	beach acres	7	954	1,199
Outdoor pools	6,182,373	262	pools	194	68	135
Indoor pools	4,187,422	48	pools	9	39	51
Tennis	2,544,056	1,590	courts	915	675	1,081
Used a playground	9,955,003	1,417	sites	638	779	1,140
Visiting gardens	1,333,259	147	sites	NI		
Visiting historic sites	4,479,751	379	sites	NI		
Visiting natural areas	3,484,251	590	sites	NI		
Volleyball	1,303,631	386	courts	23	363	462
Hunting	1,686,820	276,620	acres	28,510	248,110	318,736
Drive for pleasure	15,544,816	NA	NA	NI		
Driving motorcycle off road	266,652	122	miles	3	119	150
Driving 4-wheel-drive off road	718,972	NA	NA	NS		
Walking for pleasure	57,043,747	NA	NA	NI		
Bird watching	543,180	NA	NA	NI		
Other	553,056	NA	NA	NI		

Note: Demand multipliers used to create this chart are based on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's 2006 *Virginia Outdoors Survey* as measured at the regional level. Additional analysis is required to adjust these results for local conditions.

NA: not applicable, no standard needed

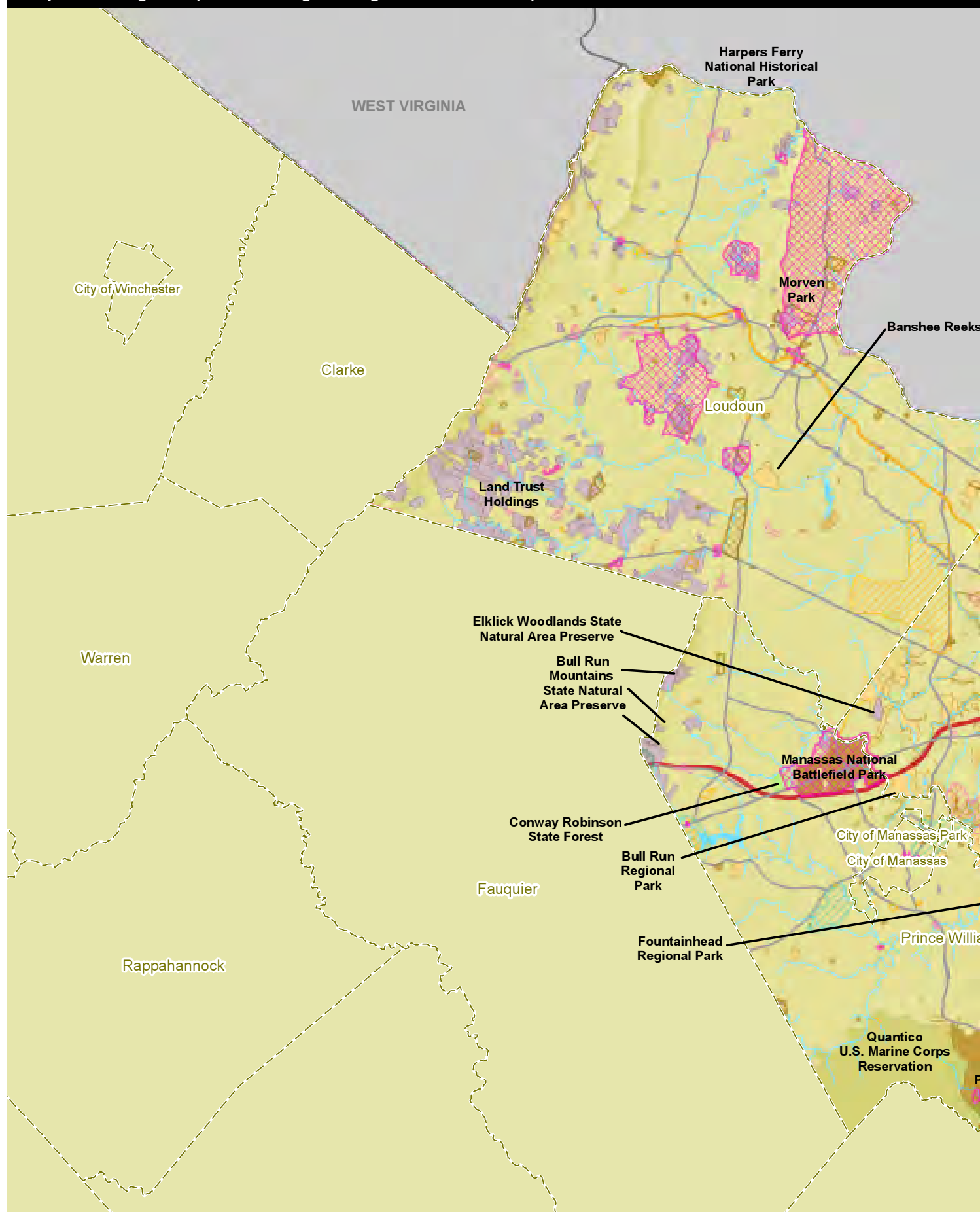
S: same as combined

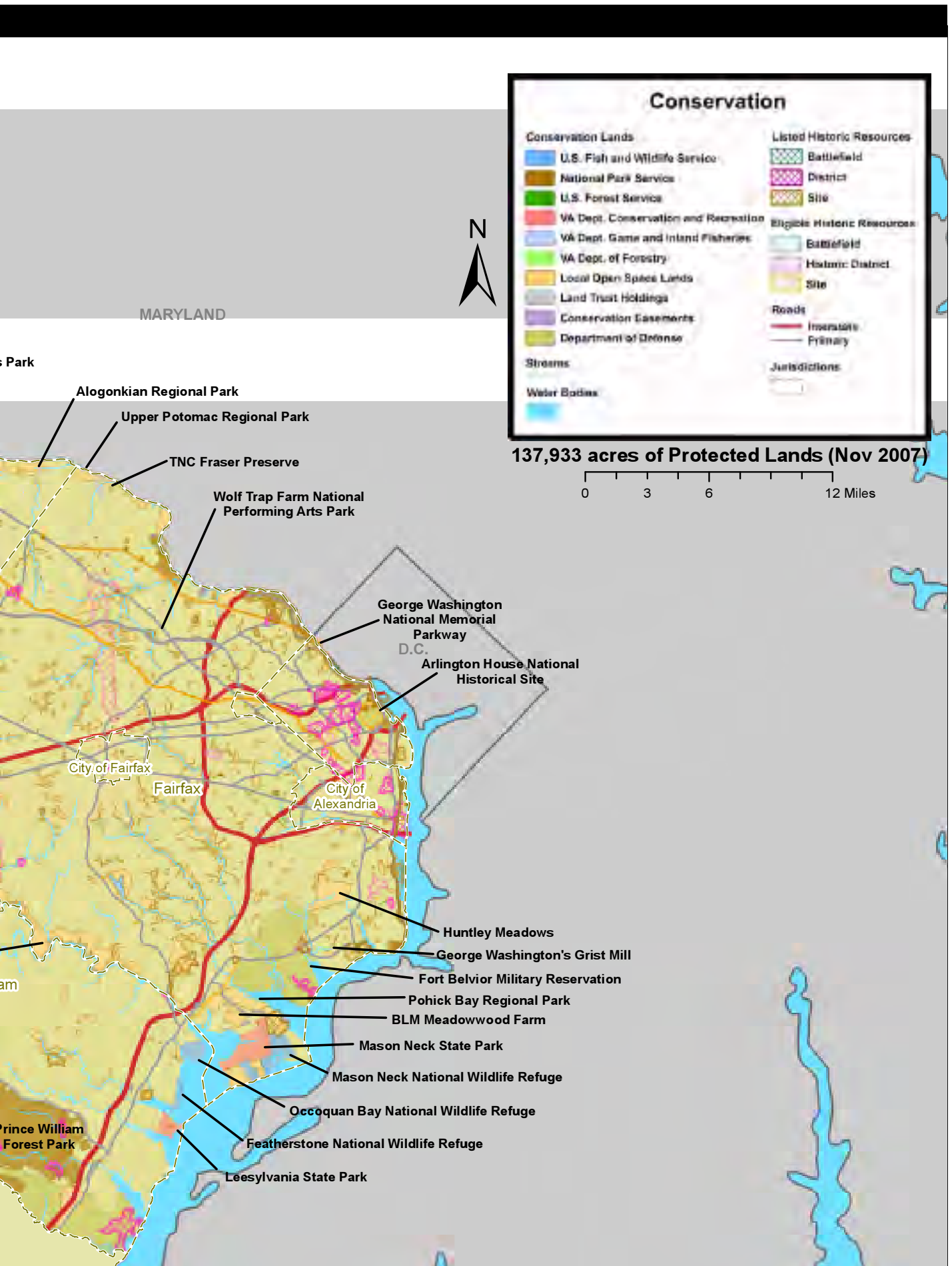
NS: not inventoried separately

NI: not inventoried

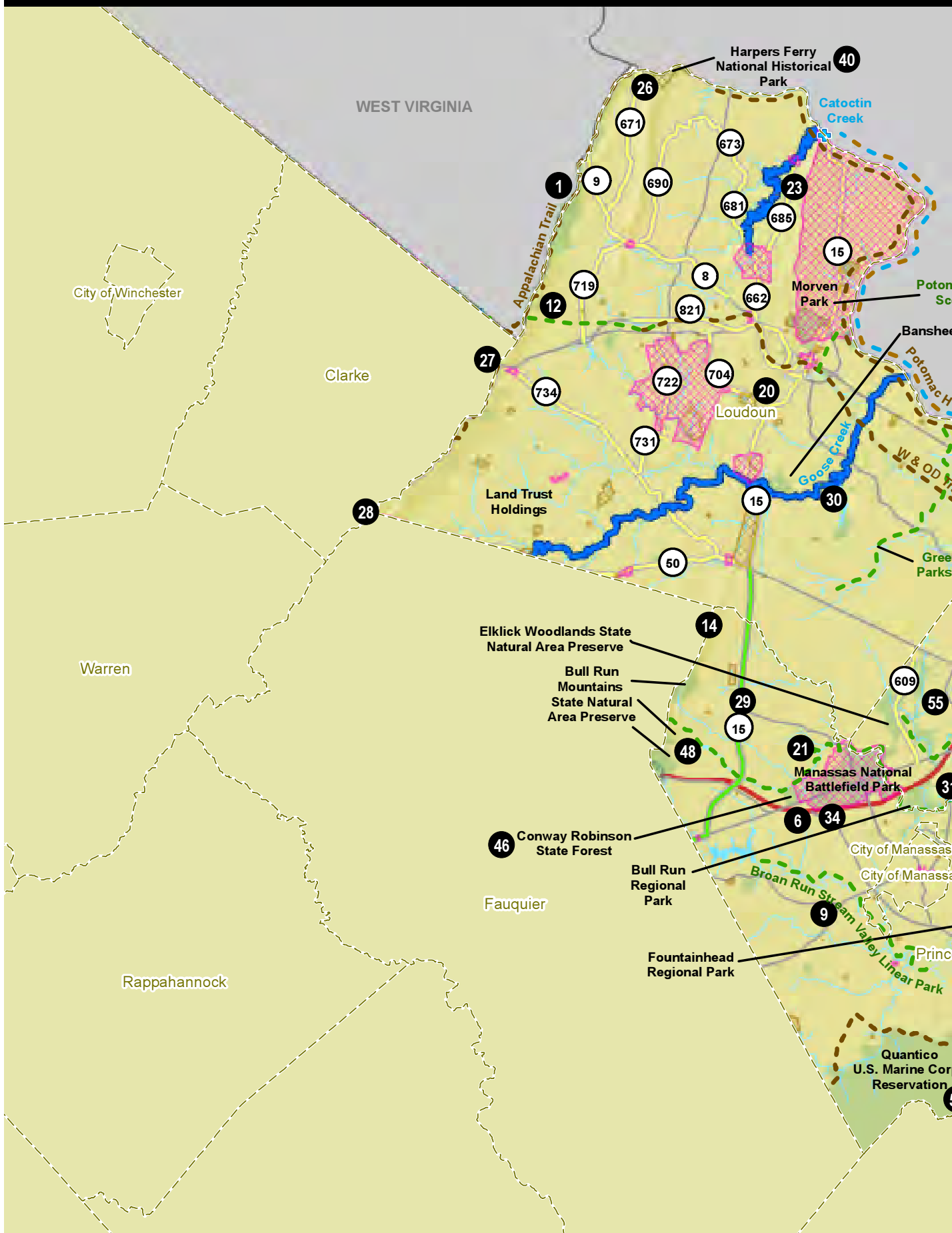
(-) indicates surplus

Map X-16. Region 8 (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) Conservation Lands



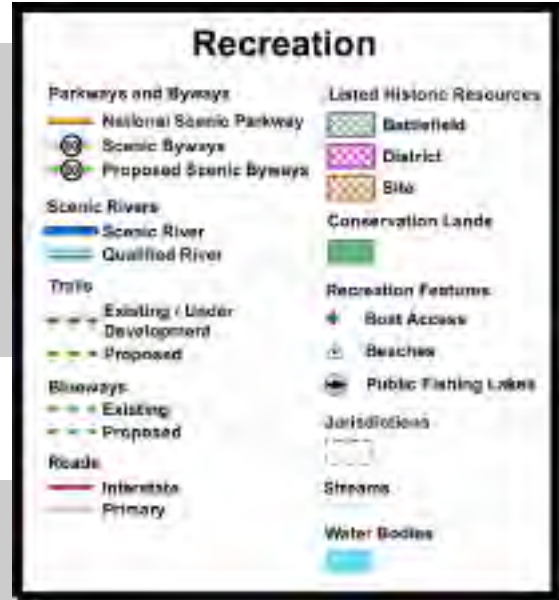


Map X-17. Region 8 (Northern Virginia Regional Commission) Outdoor Recreation



mac National
enic Trail
e Reeks Park

MARYLAND



0 3 6 12 Miles

